

REMARKS

Claims 1-18 are pending. Claim 1 is an independent claim.

The examiner uses Schmitt and Plutowski to reject claims 1-3 and 6-18 as having been obvious.

Claim 1, as amended, recites "forming a master membership grade for the at least one product based on the option selection membership grades, the master membership grade representing an average of the option selection membership grades."

The examiner admits that Schmitt does not teach or suggest this quoted feature. The examiner then looks to Plutowski for help. The examiner's argument is reproduced below:

Schmitt does not explicitly disclose the step of forming a master membership grade for the products based on the option selection membership grades. However, Plutowski 's admitted prior art teaches the step of forming a master membership grade (see Fig. 1C, as well as, column 23, lines 15-27, Plutowski). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to use the fuzzy logic processor of Schmitt, as suggested by Plutowski 's admitted prior art to score and rank the user selection by forming master membership grades. A skilled artisan would have been motivated to do so in order to learn the on-site browsing behavior based on a user profile and past purchasing history, which would have resulted in improved user response, and provided the closest and most accurate results. The combination of Schmitt and Plutowski 's admitted prior art would have resulted in a combined system with enhanced performance and substantial expectation of success.

The examiner continues to argue as follows:

Applicant argues the prior art of Schmitt in view of Plutowski fails to teach the step of "forming a master membership grade for at least one product based on the option selection membership grade." Examiner disagrees. Since the applicant did not provide sufficient description in the specification on what is the membership and master membership grade the Examiner best interpretation the membership is rating value and the master membership is the highest as defined in the summary of the invention. Referring to Fig. 20, column 19, lines 11-63, Schmitt clearly discloses the step of forming a selection with highest values based on a user input, which corresponds to the claimed limitation.

FIG. 1C of Plutowski is a bar chart of degree of membership verses action ID that is referred to as a fuzzy policy. More specifically, Plutowski discloses:

The definition of Fuzzy Policy we use here may be inconsistent with definitions used in prior art, and is not included in the tutorial treatment explained in [Kaelbling Littman and Moore 1996] and [Sutton and Barto 1998], which concentrate exclusively on stochastic control. However, Fuzzy Policy as defined here is related to "fuzzy sets" in that they both specify "degree of membership" rather than "probability." Fuzzy Policy as defined here also allows more than one action to be selected in parallel by the action selection

mechanism, whereas a stochastic policy expects only a single action to be selected at one moment in time. (Plutowski, col. 3, lines 8-19)

Applicant's "master membership grade" is clearly defined in the detailed description as originally filed.

For example:

Once the membership grades with a product/service's features are scaled, the membership grades for the product/service's features can be averaged to provide a single, master membership grade for the product /service. (Applicant's specification, page 44, lines 12-16)

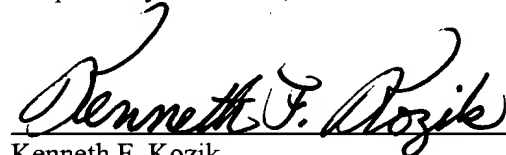
The only averaging the Plutowski discloses is policy averaging. This is very different from applicant's claimed invention. Plutowski does not teach or suggest forming a master membership grade for the at least one product based on the option selection membership grades, the master membership grade representing an average of the option selection membership grades. Accordingly, claim 1 is not rendered obvious by Schmitt and Plutowski.

It is believed that all of the pending claims have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, issue or comment does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this paper should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this paper, and the amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment.

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Respectfully submitted,

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